

Wellness in Nebraska Schools



Supports for Physical Activity within Nebraska's Public Middle and High Schools

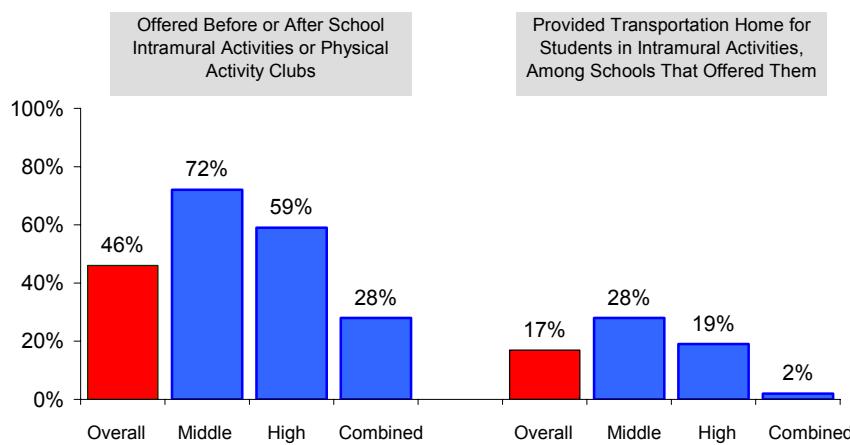
INTRODUCTION

Nebraska youth need more physical activity, with just one-third of Nebraska high school students (36.5%) meeting the federal government recommendation during 2005.¹ As a result, physical activity must be encouraged through a variety of different settings where youth spend large amounts of time. Schools can establish environments that promote physical activity skills and behaviors necessary for lifelong physical activity. This mini-report describes the environmental supports for physical activity within Nebraska's middle and high schools.

FINDINGS, reported by administrators (primarily principals) within Nebraska's middle and high schools

- Physical Education (PE):
 - According to the Nebraska Department of Education, no Nebraska schools currently require daily PE for all students in all grades (a recommendation by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)).
 - 3 in every 10 schools during 2004 (31%) did not require that students repeat a required physical education class if they failed, although this was a slight decline from 35 percent in 2002.²
 - On a positive note, almost all schools in 2004 (96%) required that a newly hired PE teacher or specialist be certified, licensed, or endorsed by the state in PE, a slight increase from 93 percent in 2002.²
- Physical Activity Opportunities for Students (outside of school sponsored sports teams), 2004:
 - Less than half (46%) of schools in 2004 offered intramural activities or physical activity clubs for students, although this was a slight increase from 42 percent in 2002.²
 - Just 17 percent of the schools that offered intramural activities or physical activity clubs provided transportation home for students involved in those activities.²
 - Combined middle and high schools, compared to independent middle/high schools, had a lower percentage for both having intramural activities and for providing transportation home for students involved in these activities.²

Figure 1: Percentage of Nebraska Public Middle and High Schools That Offered Intramural Activities and Transportation Home, 2004

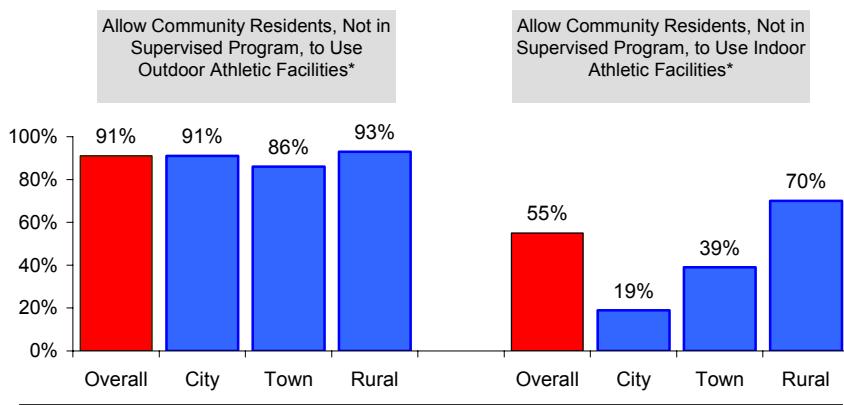


Note: middle=middle schools; high=high schools; combined=combined middle and high schools
Source: 2004 Nebraska School Health Education Profile Survey

- Physical Activity Policies, 2005³:
 - While the depth and enforcement of the policies is not known, 91 percent of schools reported that they had one or more of the following policies within their school: providing physical education and/or extracurricular physical activity programs that meet the needs and interests of all students (including those with special needs), and/or providing a broad range of competitive and noncompetitive activities that help to develop the skills needed for lifelong activity.

- Physical Activity Opportunities within Schools for Community Residents, 2005³:
 - 92 percent of schools with outdoor physical activity or athletic facilities allowed community-sponsored sports teams or physical activity programs to use their outdoor facilities during non-school hours, while 97 percent of schools with indoor facilities allowed these teams/programs to use their indoor facilities during non-school hours.
 - 91 percent of schools with outdoor physical activity or athletic facilities allowed children or adults in the community, without being in a supervised program, to use their outdoor facilities during non-school hours, while a substantially lower percentage, 55 percent, of schools with indoor facilities allowed these individuals to use their indoor facilities during non-school hours. The difference in access to indoor facilities differed dramatically by geographic location, with 19% of cities, 39% of towns, and 70% of rural communities allowing access.

Figure 2: Percentage of Nebraska Public Middle and High Schools That Allow Community Residents, Not in a Supervised Program, to Use their Outdoor and Indoor Athletic Facilities During Non-School Hours



*Allowed participation during non-school hours, among schools that have these facilities

Note: City=schools within a MSA that are in a city or on the fringe of a city; town=schools located outside a MSA that are located within a town; rural=schools located within or outside a MSA that are in a rural area

Source: 2005 Nebraska School Administrator Survey

CONCLUSION

Many public middle and high schools in Nebraska do not have environments that support physical activity for the average student. To create sustainable behavior change among Nebraska youth, schools should establish environments that encourage physical activity for all students. We are encouraging schools to work with parents and public and private organizations to find feasible solutions for their school that can improve the physical activity of Nebraska's youth.

METHODS

Findings in this fact sheet came from two data sources: school health education profile surveys (SHEPS) and the 2005 Nebraska School Administrator Survey. Both of these surveys (conducted by mail) were targeted at principals of public middle and high schools in Nebraska, and results were weighted to reflect all public middle and high schools within Nebraska. SHEPS is conducted every even calendar year and coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Data from the 2005 Nebraska School Administrator Survey were collected by the Nebraska Health and Human Services System between December 2004 and March 2005.

Fact sheet was prepared by the Nebraska Cardiovascular Health (CVH) Program, March 2006. For additional results, methodology, or other information about these data or the Nebraska CVH Program, please visit the CVH Program website www.hhss.ne.gov/CVH or call 402-471-2101.



¹ 2005 Nebraska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

² Nebraska School Health Education Profile Survey

³ 2005 Nebraska School Administrator Survey